NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

TREE/SHRUB SITE PREPARATION

(Ac.)
CODE 490

DEFINITION

Treatment of areas to improve site conditions for establishing trees and/or shrubs.

PURPOSE

- Encourage natural regeneration of desirable woody plants.
- Permit artificial establishment of woody plants.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

On all lands needing treatment to establish trees and/or shrubs.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

The method, intensity and timing of site preparation will match the limitations of the site, equipment, and the requirements for establishing the desired woody species.

An appropriate site preparation method will be chosen to achieve the intended purpose and to protect desirable vegetation.

Remaining slash and debris shall not create habitat for or harbor harmful levels of pests. (If arid climates, site and potential livestock damage are factors, a percentage of slash can be retained to trap moisture, provide shade and protect the emerging seedlings from browse damage) soil conditions. Other complementary practices and measures will be used as necessary to control erosion, runoff, compaction and displacement to acceptable levels.

Slash and debris shall be removed, treated or eliminated as appropriate.

Remaining slash and debris shall not hinder needed equipment operations or create an undue fire hazard. Refer to the standard Prescribed Burning, 338, for slash and debris that will be burned.

Measures, including the use of equipment, will be implemented to control or protect against locally invasive and noxious species that may arise from site preparation activities. If pesticides are used, refer to the standard Pest Management, 595.

CONSIDERATIONS

The site preparation method should be cost effective and protect cultural resources, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, water resources, and identified unique areas.

Visual quality objectives should be considered when selecting site preparation methods.

Anticipate possible off-site effects and modify the site preparation design accordingly.

Consider personnel safety during site preparation activities.

Consider selection of plants that have higher carbon sequestration rates.

Creating a rough ground surface in combination with low lying slash placed perpendicular to the slope and in full contact with the ground will help control runoff velocity and trap water for use by seedlings.

If natural regeneration is used, consideration should be given to the

overstory species' seed production cycle so that seed drop follows as close as possible to ground scarification and clearing. Where seedlings are transplanted, perform site prep directly before transplant and bud break of the seedling species.

Use caution when burning slash. Intense heat created from burning large concentrations may sterilize the soil.

Impacts on wildlife species, habitat and aesthetics should be considered when selecting site preparation methods.

Particulates, smoke, and other air pollutants generated by site preparation may have on-site and off-site effects on air quality.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice and protection of the site shall be prepared and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Maintain erosion control measures as necessary.

Control locally invasive and noxious plants as necessary.

Access by vehicles or equipment during or after site preparation shall be controlled to minimize erosion, compaction and other site impacts.